



Office of the Attorney General  
State of Texas

DAN MORALES  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

October 27, 1998

Ms. Joni M. Vollman  
Assistant General Counsel  
Harris County District Attorney's Office  
201 Fannin, Suite 200  
Houston, Texas 77002-1901

OR98-2513

Dear Ms. Vollman:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 119046.

The Harris County District Attorney received a request for all records concerning a specific case involving the requestor. You indicate that you will release most of the requested information. You claim, however, that two categories of information are excepted from disclosure by sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and have reviewed the sample documents you have submitted, Exhibits A and B.<sup>1</sup>

You first argue that the information in Exhibit A is excepted from disclosure by section 552.108. Section 552.108 of the Government Code provides in part:

(a) Information held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime is excepted from the requirements of Section 552.021 if:

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<sup>1</sup>We assume that the "representative sample" of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. See Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988); 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

(3) it is information that:

(A) is prepared by an attorney representing the state in anticipation of or in the course of preparing for criminal litigation;

(B) reflects the mental impressions or legal reasoning of an attorney representing the state.

\* \* \*

(c) This section does not except from the requirements of Section 552.021 information that is basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime.

Gov't Code § 552.108. Generally, a governmental body claiming an exception under section 552.108 must reasonably explain, if the information does not supply the explanation on its face, how and why section 552.108 is applicable. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.108, .301(b)(1); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You explain the documents in Exhibit A constitute the prosecutor's work product. After examining Exhibit A, it appears that the documents were prepared by an attorney representing the state in criminal litigation. The records in Exhibit A may be withheld under section 552.108(a)(3)(A).

You next argue that the material in Exhibit B must be withheld under section 552.101. Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information deemed confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." This section encompasses information protected by other statutes. Federal regulations prohibit the release of CHRI maintained in state and local CHRI systems to the general public. *See* 28 C.F.R. § 20.21(c)(1) ("Use of criminal history record information disseminated to noncriminal justice agencies shall be limited to the purpose for which it was given."), (2) ("No agency or individual shall confirm the existence or nonexistence of criminal history record information to any person or agency that would not be eligible to receive the information itself."). Section 411.083 provides that any CHRI maintained by the Department of Public Safety ("DPS") is confidential. Gov't Code § 411.083(a). Similarly, CHRI obtained from the DPS pursuant to statute is also confidential and may only be disclosed in very limited instances. *Id.* § 411.084; *see also id.* § 411.087 (restrictions on disclosure of CHRI obtained from DPS also apply to CHRI obtained from other criminal justice agencies). Therefore, any CHRI in your possession that falls within the ambit of these state and federal regulations must be withheld.

We are resolving this matter with an informal letter ruling rather than with a published open records decision. This ruling is limited to the particular records at issue

under the facts presented to us in this request and should not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records. If you have questions about this ruling, please contact our office.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don Ballard". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Don Ballard  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

JDB\nc

Ref: ID# 119046

Enclosures: Submitted documents

cc: Ms. Jennifer D. Smith Richbourg  
James F. Murphy & Associates  
P.O. Box 25  
Spring, Texas 77383-0025  
(w/o enclosures)